

Access the Web – Online Library Videos

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One of the challenges of access services is letting your patrons know what you have to offer at your library, and then communicating how they may avail themselves of those services. Increasingly, libraries are doing this through more than the traditional handouts and newsletters, but through blogs, Facebook pages, podcasts, and videos. It is the latter that I decided to peruse for this article, as I am getting ready to develop a series of instructional videos, one set for training library assistants, and another set for informing patrons about library services.

In browsing the World Wide Web, in general, and YouTube, in particular, I noticed that library videos seem to fall into a number of different categories. Informational videos are pretty straight forward, most serving as a “how-to” for a particular function or library service. These videos are sometimes tailored to patron self service, and at other times for staff training. Marketing videos are also numerous, whether geared at library services in general or a specific service offered or event forthcoming. Then there are those library related videos created just for fun, either by the library or by library patrons, which bring a light hearted note to library activities. I like to include a few of these in training just to interject a little levity. The final main category I noted were pop culture expressions of libraries and librarians, from movies and TV, which can also be used to illustrate points for patrons or staff regarding library services and access to resources. They are also handy for use in presentations to colleagues to lighten an otherwise dry topic.

Not only do the videos showcase a variety of purpose, but also different types of composition and level of design. Some are simply text and graphics, with or without subtitles, music, etc. Others incorporate live action and some use plot devices such as satire or parody. Videos can be a simple film done with a digital camera, or they may incorporate software such as PowerPoint through the use of editing software such as Final Cut or Camtasia.

While the tools available may be guided by your budget or institutional availability, the creativity with which a video can be produced is only as limited as your imagination. However, everyone needs a creative boost from time to time, so hopefully the following will spark some ideas and get your creative juices flowing towards planning your own library video and bringing the age of multimedia to access services in your library.

Library Limbo

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBS7JEEBvmE>

A student from Cornell University completed a project done in a 1920s animation style about a day at URIS Library. The purpose of the project was to study time cycles, and libraries are no exception to the cyclical nature of existence. The student included many stereotypes – such as a librarian shushing patrons and pointing towards quiet signs. However, it also highlights some of the same issues faced by many libraries – patrons messing up the shelves, sleeping, talking on cell phones, and the now ever present technology noises. It is also an interesting video being an outside perspective on what the student sees as the highlights of library existence.

Tour the Library

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHljR4LYmOA>

This video tour of the Harper College Library features a narrator and student as they travel around the library seated on a book truck. They make several stops including the information, reference, and circulation desks. The writer of the script infused a great deal of humor into the short video, with the information desk attendant acting like a flight attendant and a hilarious narrator so stuck on his pitch that he ignores that the student already knows all about the library and has completed her assignment. I also find it amusing how the student's name keeps changing, but also that the student makes many positive comments about the library. I especially love her line at end. This video does an excellent job of marketing library resources in a user friendly and hip way that

will resonate with its patrons.

Annoying Library Patrons

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBqD4G0OnVs>

This is a lighthearted library staff perspective of patron behaviors that annoy not only staff but other patrons as well. This is a great example of what you can do with only a small amount of technology and expertise. The creators used slides with pictures and music and simple rhyming phrases to call attention to such behaviors as talking too loud on a cell phone in the library. The presentation also covers other types of annoying patron behaviors, that anyone who has worked in access Services will recognize. The video ties in with an article by Quo Elbert "10 Things to do to Annoy Other Patrons at the Library," published May 1, 2008 by Associated Content. http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/742247/10_things_to_do_to_annoy_other_patrons.html or using the Tiny URL, <http://tiny.cc/annoy>.

Self-Service Circulation at Jönköping University Library

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KKrh_4FQYQM

This Swedish video with English captions is a wonderful example of a patron how-to video, and as such is very short and simple. The student demonstrates for patrons how to create their library account, as well as how to borrow and return books, on their own without staff intervention. Even though this video was created to demonstrate self service, there is the wonderful inclusion of a bit at the end to direct patrons to a staff person if they need assistance. With the student both verbally describing and physically demonstrating the process, as well as with the inclusion of captions, patrons that learn in different ways should all benefit from the tutorial. This video is also an excellent example of spicing up a how-to video containing fairly functional and non-entertaining information in a way that will catch the eye of the consumer.

Setting Up an ILLiad Account

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7i2lZhDHrc>

Another fine example of a how-to video is from the Medical Center at St. Louis University. This particular demonstration gives instructions for first time users in the one-time registration process for ILLiad. Unlike the Swedish video above, this is done in a more basic and functional style as a tutorial with captions and screen shots. While sometimes you want a flashy video that resembles entertainment, sometimes it is more appropriate or feasible to go with something very basic with no music or fancy camera tricks, other than your basic slide transitions. This video does include a few more modifications as appears to have been created with Camtasia or Captivate, perhaps in conjunction with PowerPoint, making use of the user-friendly tool which will at first display the whole screen and then zoom into the portion of the screen you wish the patron to focus on, for example where to click the mouse.

Finding Course Reserve Materials, UCLA

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ew8W7SefNtk>

Another example of a video that uses an entertaining approach to market services outside of the library. In this case the device used is the UCLA mascot. This video was made for the campus residential TV station and is part of a series called LITE BITE – Library Instruction to Everyone – and as such keeps with a look and feel comparable to a commercial. The creators use classical music and short library tips combined with live action portions with students and screen shots. Sure this video is a little cheesy, but it is funny too and gets the information out there in a digestible sized BITE.

The Chronicles of Libraria

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZR6WkbPK8M&feature=related>

Student perspectives on the library highlight what students notice most about the library, and this video also makes great use of the use of parody to entertain. Based on Saturday Night Lives' digital short "Lazy Sunday," a couple of USF Tampa students made a fun library marketing video with an anti-plagiarism message. This video is actually one of a two part library video series created by students about the library. The other video in the series was related to use of the library's databases. Cool graphic effects and music illustrate the steps to completing a paper, including getting resources, and of course don't forget the smoothies. This video is a more unique approach to marketing, and one that will resonate with the students on a popular culture level.

1987 – Betty Glover Library Workout Tape Ad

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8BKX2eQ0Q>

This video is one of my personal favorites, as I am a huge fan of Betty. This video is set at Arizona State University's Hayden Library, and while it is dated it remains a popular classic. Parodies are a common and fun method in which to market library services or inform people about libraries in general, which perhaps explains why so many library related videos use parody as a plot device. This particular video is a wonderful parody of the 1980s era infomercial. It is an extremely funny simply filmed video showing how library staff can use common library tools to get a workout, all with popular 1980s songs providing the soundtrack. This video also demonstrates how much libraries have changed in the past 20 years – kind of like a time capsule. Some of the equipment many newer librarians won't even recognize. Though there are those things that remain the same as well. Betty is a library legend.

Cambridge Public Library - Etiquette

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAQGG0_I-CQ

Not to be outdone by academic libraries, public libraries also have used videos to market their services to patrons. This video from the Daniel P. Collins Branch of the Cambridge Public Library represents a collaborative effort between CPL employees and Cambridge Ringe and Latin High School students working at CEA (Cambridge Education Access) which manages the areas educational TV channels. This is a wonderful example of a marketing commercial for library services done as a live action parody of MasterCard's "priceless" commercial series. The aim of the commercial is to relate library services to everyday life, in this example – planning a wedding. It also underscores the value of the library services to the patrons the library is aimed at, which for public libraries are their tax paying supporters.

Librarian Lays Down the Law

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzbDdgWiaS0&feature=related>

Not all library related videos are created by libraries or their patrons. Sometimes the library world makes its way to the silver screen and enters a portion of our popular culture. This particular video is a scene from the movie Party Girl (1995) in which Mary, played by Parker Posey, takes a job as a library clerk, working for her librarian aunt. The clip starts showing her doing some stereotypical Hollywood library activities – stamping and stacking

books – but she is far from the stereotypical library clerk. This scene highlights my favorite part of the movie in which she really lets a patron have it for randomly reshelving a book. She defends the stacks from this abuse by issuing the patron a public tirade about his behavior. Anyone in charge of stacks maintenance I'm sure can empathize, as can any library employee that has had that one patron that you just really want to reproach. Since we don't often get the chance in access services to tell that patron just how we feel due to our customer service orientation, it is entertaining and cathartic at times to watch it happen on TV or in the movies.